

CULTURAL VALUES OF A MAJORITY OF AMERICANS

1. **Personal Control Over the Environment:** People can/should control nature, their own environment, and their futures. Energetic, goal-oriented society.
2. **Change/Mobility:** Change is good positive, means progress, improvement, growth. Result: Transient society – geographically, economically, socially. New is better.
3. **Control of Time:** Time is valuable and limited. Result: Efficiency and progress at the expense of relationships.
4. **Equality/Egalitarianism:** All people have equal opportunities, are important individuals not for which family they come from. Result: Status is not acknowledged and if it is it will be based on merit.
5. **Individualism, Independence, and Privacy:** People are viewed as individuals (not group members) with own needs and need time to be alone. Result: Americans viewed as self-centered, isolated, and lonely.
6. **Self-Help:** Americans take pride in their own accomplishments. Result: Respect is given for own achievements.
7. **Competition/Free Enterprise:** Competition brings out the best and free enterprise produces the most progress. Result: Less emphasis on cooperation.
8. **Future Oriented/Optimism:** Regardless of past or present, future will be better/happier. Result: Constantly looking ahead, with little value on past.
9. **Action and Work Oriented:** Work is morally right. Identity defined by work. Results: More emphasis on “doing” than on “being”. Time is wasted if nothing accomplished or done.
10. **Informality:** Formality is a show of arrogance and artificial superiority. Result: Casual attitudes between people; use of first names is common.
11. **Directness, Openness, “Honesty”:** Only trust people who “look you in the eye.” “Tell it like it is.” Result: Tend to speak directly/bluntly even if it makes others uncomfortable.
12. **Practicality/Efficiency:** Most important consideration in decision-making. Result: Less emphasis on emotional or consensual decisions.
13. **Materialism:** Accumulation of materials goods seen as rewards of hard work. Result: Americans viewed as focused on thing more than on people or relationships.

Adapted from “The Values American Live By” by L. Robert Kohls